

January 29, 2004

A weekly e-newsletter for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant team

# The Big Story WTS restructures workforce

Earlier this week WTS, the management and operating contractor at WIPP, announced a workforce restructuring plan to meet the current and future operational needs of the WIPP facility. It is anticipated that 45 WTS positions will be affected.

The restructuring process will allow WTS to achieve the optimal personnel skills balance necessary to continue the safe and efficient operation of WIPP and the National TRU Program. WTS has been trying to achieve this personnel skills balance for the last several years through retraining and managed attrition, but there is still a skills imbalance.

The restructuring plan consists of two phases: a Voluntary Separation Program (VSP) with incentives followed by an Involuntary Separation Program (ISP), if necessary. Both plans feature the same separation benefits, including displaced worker medical benefits, tuition assistance, job placement assistance and relocation assistance for eligible workers. In addition to these benefits, a \$5000 incentive is available to employees who choose to accept the VSP. These benefits will help to minimize the impact of the workforce reduction on affected WTS employees and area communities.

The VSP has already been offered to WTS employees. Employees have also been given the information they need to make an informed decision on whether to accept the VSP. The VSP is absolutely voluntary. This phase of the plan allows each individual to decide what is best in their particular circumstances.

The VSP is offered to WTS employees through March 11. At that time, the second phase of the restructuring plan, the ISP, will follow if less than 45 employees chose to participate in the VSP.

The Workforce Restructuring Plan - 2004 is available for viewing by clicking <u>here</u>. The plan details the reasoning behind the restructuring process, its effects and WTS' ultimate goals for its workforce mix. Highlights of the plan also include:

**Separation Plans and a Summary of the Downsizing Process** – This section outlines the options available to separated employees in each case.

**Separation Payment Calculation Tables** – Charts detailing the number of week's pay for the separation and the amount associated with the years of service.

Benefits Matrix for Separated Employees – A table that clearly compares the benefits and options available to employees who elect to accept the VSP versus those who are separated through the ISP.

There has already been significant participation in the VSP. To date, 21 employees have volunteered.

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### Feedback

Contact us with feedback or submit your e-mail address for updates. Click here to e-mail.

WIPP Shipments (as of 1/29/04 at 7:14 a.m.)

Shipments scheduled to arrive at WIPP this week 21

Total shipments received at WIPP 2,309

In the news



Project progress



Just another day



What it's no



Program kick off



Develop skills



**Our Team News** 

### **Characterization News**

### **MORK** project progresses



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TRU TeamWorks continues coverage of the Modular Repackaging Unit (MORK) project. The MORK is a glove box system developed and assembled by WTS with design expertise from LANL/CB. Once complete, the MORK system will be put into operation at the Savannah River Site to help the site meet its 2006 waste remediation goal. A repacking facility already exists at SRS, but the addition of the MORK will improve waste throughput and worker safety. The photos below illustrate the work being done on the MORK by WTS and contractor staff at the EPD facility on the Hobbs highway.



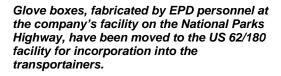
Left: A look inside a transportainer. HEPA filtration systems and fire suppression hardware installation is ongoing in these transportainers, or trailers, that make up the MORK.

Right: Drum lifts have arrived and are ready for installation. The drum lift to the right will be installed next to a glove box. The drum lift will lift the waste drums and move them into place so that they may be safely opened for visual examination inside a glovebox.





Left: Once the waste has been visually examined through the glove box window, it is repackaged into a second drum attached to the glove box's output end. A "daughter" drum lift then handles the output drums that will ultimately contain the examined wastes.





WTS personnel, along with Constructors Incorporated and Budwine Service Electric employees, are working to complete the MORK project. Once the system is operational, it will be fully tested before being sent to SRS later this year. Watch *TRU TeamWorks* for future updates on this exciting project.

## **Transportation News**



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### **Just Another Day**

The first Nevada Test Site (NTS) shipment was no big deal for Carlsbad natives and WIPP drivers, Bill and Cordie Mossier. "This was just another shipment for us," said Cordie.

#### Nevada (1/7/04) - 1:00 p.m.

Cordie pulled out of NTS at 1:00 p.m., with an escort from the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and the Nevada State Police in front and back. Just over an hour later, Nevada was seeing taillights and California was looking at headlights.



Tri-State Drivers Cordie and Bill Mossier

### California (1/7/04) – 2:15 p.m.

CHP continued to escort our truck through California, even adding the CHP helicopter. Because of the escorts other trucks would not pass us, so every so often CHP would instruct us to exit so the trucks behind us could move on," says Cordie.

"The escorts were nice in Barstow," Cordie continued, "The only way through town was Main Street and at red lights the lead escort turned on its lights so we didn't have to stop." Finally, at Ludlow, Cordie turned the wheel over to Bill.

#### Arizona (1/8/04) - 12:00 a.m.

The shipment entered Arizona at midnight and it all calmed down. No escort. No air support. Not even an inspection at the border. "I just did my required inspections and continued through the state," said Bill. As you will notice, Bill had the easy part of the driving, because just before entering New Mexico it was Cordie's turn again.

### New Mexico(1/8/04) - 6:00 a.m.

The New Mexico Department of Public Safety (DPS) conducted a full inspection at the Gallup Port of Entry. They found two loose bolts on the fender and a very small antifreeze leak. "I corrected the problems and we continued; this is also where the media coverage started," Cordie said with a smile.

From Gallup to Clines Corners the shipment was escorted by the New Mexico State Police and the DPS, not to mention the media vehicles and helicopters. The most eventful part of the trip was when Cordie just had to honk at the WIPP protesters perched on the Carlisle overpass in Albuquerque. "I asked the state police if I could, and they said 'sure,' so I did." Finally at Roswell, Bill took the wheel and drove to the WIPP site. Cordie finished by saying "We just want to do our job as safe as possible, and as for that shipment, we wouldn't change a thing."

#### WIPP Shipments (as of 1/29/04 at 7:14 a.m.)

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Total shipments received at WIPP 2,309

Total Waste Disposed Underground at WIPP

> CH drums 48,272

CH standard waste boxes 2,436

CH ten-drum overpacks 633

Cubic meters 17,566



### **Disposal News**

### What low-level radioactive waste is not



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Last week, *TRU TeamWorks* reviewed Land Withdrawal Act definitions for different types of radioactive waste (Click <u>here</u> for January 22 issue). By law, only defense-generated TRU waste is disposed at WIPP. Spent fuel and high-level wastes are prohibited at WIPP.

This week, we'll look more closely at low-level radioactive waste. Low-level waste and WIPP TRU waste are often confused, due in part to the low levels of radioactivity emitted by most TRU waste.

The League of Women Voter's *Nuclear Waste Primer* sums up low-level waste as "a catchall category defined by what it is not, rather than what it is. It includes all radioactive waste other than uranium mill tailings, transuranic waste and high-level waste, including spent nuclear fuel."

While low-level waste is generated by a wide range of facilities that use radioactive materials, including industrial plants and nuclear power plants, WIPP TRU waste is generated by the research, development and fabrication of nuclear weapons.

DOE's Radioactive Waste Management Manual (DOE M 435.1-1) defines low-level waste as "radioactive waste that is not high-level radioactive waste, spent nuclear fuel, transuranic waste, byproduct material (as defined in section 11e.(2) of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended), or naturally occurring radioactive material." [Adapted from Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, as amended].



## Safety News

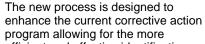
### **Issues Management Program kicks Off February 2**



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A new issues management process will be implemented next week. The new program allows for employees to address safety issues, compliance issues, program issues, technical questions, near-misses and other issues that could adversely impact performance at WIPP. It also provides employees the opportunity to be a part of issues management resolution and long-term effective corrective actions.



efficient and effective identification and correction of issues that could affect success at WIPP.



Recently, the new program was presented to employees during staff meetings to ensure that employees were aware of the new program and its importance. The "WIPP FORM" forms and submission boxes are located at various locations at the site and in town.

"WTS senior management is committed to the success of this program as a tool in resolving issues for WTS personnel. I encourage all employees to become familiar with the "WIPP FORM" and use this new tool in support of our continued success here at WIPP," says David Reber, WTS deputy general manager.

A cross-organizational team researched and benchmarked corrective action programs from various DOE contractors and private companies. During this process, the team discovered that making sure all appropriate parties were involved in corrective action planning at the WIPP could prevent issues from recurring over time.



### **Working Smart**



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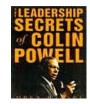
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# Bookshelf 2004 Develop your leadership skills

Looking for some good books on leadership? If so, here are some suggestions from the GovLeaders Web site (www.govleaders.org) worth looking into.

#### The Leadership Secrets of Colin Powell

This book expands on Oren Harari's article, "Quotations from Chairman Powell: A Leadership Primer." GovLeaders Web site says this book is loaded with insight into the U.S. Government's best-known and most-respected transformational leader.

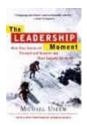


## Five Star Leadership: The Art and Strategy of Creating Leaders at Every Level

Military leadership isn't just about command and control. Patrick L. Townsend and Joan E. Gebhardt's review of the literature on U.S. military leadership contends U.S. armed forces may actually be ahead of the private sector in terms of pushing authority down to an appropriate level and developing leaders throughout an organization.

## The Leadership Moment: Nine True Stories of Triumph and Disaster and Their Lessons for Us All

Michael Useem identifies nine powerful stories illustrating different aspects of leadership, including those of Eugene Krantz (Apollo 13), Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain (Battle of Gettysburg) and Alfredo Cristiani (peace in El Salvador).



## Answers for Working Smart Land Withdrawal Act Quiz, Part 2 (TRU TeamWorks, January 16)

- 7. b. State of New Mexico, National Academy of Sciences, Environmental Evaluation Group
- 8. True
- 9. c. EPA Administrator
- a. "backfill, room seals, panel seals, and other manmade barrier components of the disposal system."
- 11. b. Every 5 years
- 12. b. When all shafts in the repository are back-filled and sealed.

### Announcements

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### WTS management organization changes

Charles E. (Chuck) Conway is appointed External Programs manager effective immediately. In this position, he is responsible for management of government furnished supplies and instruments, small quantity site strategy and other external acceleration initiatives. Conway was most recently the general manager of the Government Technical Services Division of Washington Energy and Environment. He has been employed with Washington Group and its related companies for over 30 years, including key management positions at WIPP. He holds a bachelor of science degree in mechanical engineering from Penn State. Conway reports directly to Steve Warren.



Effective immediately, Kim A. Jackson will be taking on dual responsibilities. She will remain as the Transportation Department Manager, while also serving as deputy manager for External Programs. For all Transportation Department matters, Jackson will report directly to Steve. In her role as deputy for External Programs, she will report to Conway.



Additionally effective February 1, Quality Assurance (QA) programs are being consolidated. In this move, CCP QA, managed by A. J. Fisher, will now be in the QA Department. Fisher will report to Mike W. Lipscomb, QA manager.

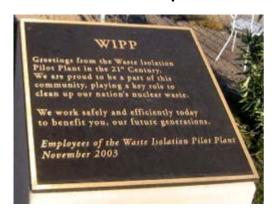


#### WIPP honored for blood drives

Recently WIPP received the "Outstanding Government Agency - 2003" award from United Blood Services at a recognition luncheon held in Roswell. WIPP was also named as a "Life Sustaining Member," a recognition given to those organizations whose members donated a minimum of 250 pints of blood per year (the number of pints needed to sustain the blood supply in New Mexico each day). WIPP and three other "Life Sustaining Members" (New Mexico Military Institute, Carlsbad Medical Center/Community and the Community of Ruidoso) supply almost 50 percent of the blood supply in southeastern New Mexico. Mary Williams (pictured at right), WTS Health Services, was given special recognition for coordinating the WIPP blood drives.



### TRUPACT-II Time Capsule



The bronze plaque shown at left was installed beside the TRUPACT-II time capsule at Millennium Park along the Carlsbad Riverwalk. WIPP joined the City of Carlsbad and Assistance League of Carlsbad for the millennium project, which is scheduled for dedication during April 2004. Photo courtesy of Deanna Taylor. Assistance League of Carlsbad.